

HONORING FLORIDA HEROINES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the many generations of women who have shaped our Nation and thank them for their invaluable contributions.

As the first Hispanic woman elected to Congress, I am grateful and inspired by their legacy. These women have influenced public policies, built institutions, and contributed to a stronger economy. Without their contributions, our society would be less lively, our culture more impoverished, and peace would be less stable. We need to respect their great achievements by continuing the job.

I share the hopes and aspirations of all women across America who wish to make the lives of our daughters, sisters, aunts, and mothers more equitable. I have always been committed and dedicated to advancing the role of women in our society, and I work toward policies that would assist them and their families. That is why I have joined the bipartisan Congressional Women's Caucus and have supported extensive legislation and programs fighting domestic violence and women's access to a quality education.

Today I would like to pay tribute to some of the more energetic champions of women's rights from my area of south Florida: Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, Helen Aguirre Ferre, Julia Tuttle, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, and Judge Bertila Soto.

Roxcy Bolton has had an impressive career by advocating for equal rights in the workplace and also by creating the first rape treatment center in the country, located in my hometown of Miami. She also founded Women in Distress, the first women's rescue center in Florida. Roxcy has received numerous accolades and is an iconic and loved figure in our community.

Congratulations, Roxcy.

Helen Aguirre Ferre is another pioneer. She is an award-winning journalist and communications consultant who was recently inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame. As the chair of the Board of Trustees of Miami Dade College—my alma mater—Helen is committed to promoting education and establishing policies that would help students across our community.

Congratulations, Helen.

Julia Tuttle, known as the mother of Miami, made history as the only female founder of a major U.S. city when she helped establish the city of Miami many years ago. Julia's vision and perseverance have long been traits that south Floridians have worked to carry on since the founding of our great city of Miami.

Tuttle's mantle of leadership is heavy, but it has been carried on by so many others.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas made another kind of south Florida history

when she worked tirelessly to save her beloved Everglades. Her iconic book, "The Everglades: River of Grass," helped awaken so many to the need of preserving this one-of-a-kind ecological wonder and led the fight to establish the Everglades National Park.

Judge Bertila Soto is a modern-day heroine. She is a fellow graduate of my alma maters, Florida International University and the University of Miami. She was named chief judge of Florida's 11th Judicial Circuit.

Bertila is both the first Cuban American and the first woman to helm the largest judicial circuit in the State. Her energy and understanding of complex legal issues have driven her to success. Every day that Judge Soto is hard at work, she is not only living, but making south Florida history.

Congratulations to Bertila.

I also want to honor our female pilots of World War II, the Women Airforce Service Pilots, also known as the WASPS. They were responsible for removing the barriers for women in the military today. And I know this because my daughter-in-law, Lindsay, was afforded the opportunity to join the Marine Corps and fly combat missions both in Iraq and Afghanistan thanks to these women pioneers.

South Florida has been home to some of these remarkable heroines like Ruth Shafer Fleisher, Shirley Kruse, and Bee Haydu, as well as Frances Rohrer Sargent and Helen Wyatt Snapp, who have passed away.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to recognize all of these outstanding women, past and present. May these role models continue to remind girls and young women that nothing can hold them back from realizing their dreams.

HEROIN AND OPIOID OVERDOSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, the chart that is being set up next to me here depicts graphically one of the most sickening trends in terms of an increasing cause of death in the United States, which is heroin and opioid overdoses.

On the top, the map shows data from 2004 from the Centers for Disease Control, when 7,500 Americans lost their lives to overdose deaths. In 2014, that number has grown to 27,000.

The red shaded area is high-intensity areas of death of up to 20 per 100,000 in the population. The blue is 10 or less. And in 2014, as you can see, the red is slowly but inexorably taking over the entire country.

This is a crisis which, again, affects every part of our country, whether it is rural, suburban, or urban. It affects Republican districts. It affects Democratic districts. And it is time for our Nation to recognize that this needs to be treated the same way we would any natural disaster or public health emergency in the country.

In 2016, we know these numbers are, in fact, going to get worse.

The Office of Chief Medical Examiner in the State of Connecticut released their 2015 numbers a few weeks ago, and the number grew in the State of Connecticut by 20 percent, to 723 deaths in 2015.

Just this morning in the local press in southeastern Connecticut, a 25-year-old was found dead in a motor vehicle on Route 12 outside the Groton Navy Base, and a young man, an 18-year-old, was found dead in Norwich just a couple of days ago.

It is time for us to listen to the folks who are on the front lines—the police officers, the addiction counselors, and the folks that are dealing with this program bringing people to life with Narcan—and understand that we need a new approach to solving this incredibly dangerous crisis for our Nation.

The good news is that the Senate, a couple of weeks ago, passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 94-1. It is a good bill. It makes some smart changes in terms of the overprescribing of painkillers. It deals with the disposal of the proliferation of painkillers that is far too great in the Nation today. It also talks about changing protocols in the FDA, HHS, DOD, VA, all of the agencies of the Federal Government that deal with folks suffering from pain. Unfortunately, though, the bill does not contain a single penny of emergency assistance which the police departments across the country, the addiction counselors across the country are begging for.

In the House, there is a bill, H.R. 4473, which does provide emergency supplemental appropriations this year to try and get resources so that folks who are dealing with this crisis and families that are dealing with this crisis are actually going to get real help. And this bill has been endorsed by 21 organizations, from the Fraternal Order of Police, the police and the cops and the firefighters who are out there saving people's lives right now with Narcan, and also the addiction counselors who, again, do not have adequate detox facilities and beds to deal with the carnage that is happening all across this country.

The Republican majority leader announced last week that in May, the House will take up the Senate bill. I wish it was this month. I wish we could move with the urgency of a natural disaster like a fire or hurricane or tornado striking parts of our country that causes devastation much less than what these maps depict. However, the fact that there is going to be some movement is some sign of hope.

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But it is important to remember it is not enough to just pass authorizing language that is about trying to change policy without funding, because the folks who are dealing with this problem, who are watching us like a